

12th September Meeting 1999

Trinity College Dublin

2nd–3rd September, 1999

For the first time, the September meeting revisited one of the institutions which hosted it in the past. (The first meeting was a one-day meeting in Trinity on September 9th, 1988 and it was largely organized by the then Secretary of the Society, A. G. O'Farrell, who also reported on that meeting in issue 21 (December 1988) of this Bulletin.) The time normally devoted to contributed papers was taken over by six talks on a selection of key figures in Irish Mathematics over the past century. There were five main speakers in addition to the aforementioned five, and all the talks were in the Constantia Maxwell Theatre of the Hamilton Building in Trinity. For most talks the audience was of the order of 45 people, but these were not always the same people and the total attendance was somewhat higher. The programme for the first day was as follows and the proceedings were chaired by the vice-President, E. Gath, before lunch and by the President, D. Armitage, in the afternoon.

S. Dineen (UCD) *Complex analysis on infinite dimensional spaces*

D. H. Armitage (QUB) *E. T. Whittaker (1873–1956)*

T. T. West (TCD) *A. J. McConnell (1903–1993)*

P. Barry (UCC) *P. B. Kennedy (1929–1967)*

L. Ó Raifeartaigh (DIAS) *C. Ryan (1934–1973)*

E. Ortiz (Imperial College) *C. Lanczos (1893–1974)*

J. T. Lewis (DIAS) *J. L. Synge (1897–1995)*

Many of the participants were then ready for a pleasant dinner at a nearby hotel. There were four more talks on the second day plus an Ordinary meeting of the Society (arguably occupying a slot used for panel discussions at some earlier meetings). The two morning talks were chaired by T. West and those in the afternoon by T. Murphy.

G. J. Murphy (UCC) *Quantum groups*

R. J. Archbold (Aberdeen) *Extensions of pure states: variants of the Kadison-Singer problem*

G. Pfeiffer (NUIG) *Computations with Coxeter groups*

J. H. Davenport (Bath) *Algebraic geometry goes constructive*

This reporter was very happy with all the talks and the obvious efforts made by all the contributors to prepare interesting talks accessible to all.

The talks on key figures of Irish Mathematics in the past century might be said to include giants of Mathematics (Lanczos, Synge and Whittaker), those whose promise and early achievements were great but whose lives ended tragically (Kennedy and Ryan) and A. J. McConnell who may be more widely known for his impact as Provost of Trinity than for his mathematical accomplishments. As the 20th century becomes entirely history, future generations will be able to look back on the impact of those who are still active and there will be many more than six who will be regarded as having had significant impacts. But one meeting cannot hope to do justice to all and so that was not attempted. To celebrate World Mathematical year 2000, the Royal Irish Academy plans to publish a book of biographies of Irish Mathematicians (selected over several centuries) and this should provide a more complete coverage.

The meeting was co-funded by the Society and Trinity College Dublin.

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